

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:295

ANSWERED ON:22.03.2017

Violation of Labour Laws

Ninama Shri Manshankar;Singh Shri Bharat

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has prepared any database of workers employed abroad including students and other persons residing in other countries and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether the Government monitors the compliance of labour laws in consultations with the countries concerned and if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has received complaints from Indian workers in various countries regarding violation of labour laws and if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to provide assistance to Indians facing problems and the role of Indian Council of Overseas Employment (ICOE) in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ)

(a to (d) A statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARA (a) to (d) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 295 REGARDING "VIOLATION OF LABOUR LAWS" FOR ANSWER ON 22.03.2017

The government maintains a database of workers of Emigration Check Required (ECR) category proceeding for overseas employment to the 18 notified ECR countries. Country-wise and State-wise details of ECR category emigrant workers for 2016 are enclosed at Annexure-I. As per inputs from Indian Missions and Posts abroad, there are over 30 million Overseas Indians. Country-wise details are enclosed at Annexure- II. The student module on the MADAD portal (Online Consular Service Management) has also been started from 15.07.2016 and 10523 students have been registered so far.

2. Complaints are received from Indian emigrant workers in ECR countries, from time to time, regarding violation of contractual terms, adverse working conditions, wage related issues, employer related problems, medical and insurance related problems and compensation/death claims. Amidst the ongoing economic downturn in the Gulf countries due to fall in crude oil prices, there are some reports of Indian workers being asked to leave before completion of their existing contracts. Instances of unpaid salaries for last few months have also been reported.

3. The government is working in close coordination with foreign governments to address concerns related to employment and welfare of Indian workers. Immediately on receipt of such complaints, the same are addressed by Indian Missions by taking them up with the concerned foreign authorities. Labour and Manpower Cooperation MoUs/Agreements are already in place with the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, Jordan and Malaysia that provide the institutional framework to comprehensively discuss and review these matters.

4. The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF), aimed at assisting Overseas Indian nationals abroad in times of distress on a means tested basis in the most deserving cases, has already been extended to all Indian Missions and Posts abroad. The 'MADAD' portal, an important initiative of the Ministry, is an effort to extend a helping hand to Indians abroad requiring consular assistance. It enables online logging and tracking of grievances including by emigrant workers and their family members. As of now, 19,775 grievances have been registered on the portal and 15094 grievances have been resolved so far. The E-Migrate system provides the government a comprehensive and online database of emigrants, Missions, Recruiting Agents, Foreign Employers and Insurance Agencies and is helpful in making the whole emigration cycle faster, transparent and allows authentication/verification of credentials of all the stakeholders.

5. Indian Worker Resource Centres (IWRCs) have been setup that provide guidance and counselling on all matters pertaining to

overseas Indian workers. IWRCs in Dubai (UAE), Riyadh and Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) and Kuala Lumpur are already functional while another one in Sharjah (UAE) will be operational soon. Shelter homes for distressed Indian nationals have been setup in Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE and Malaysia. Missions in Gulf countries also conduct Open Houses on a regular basis where workers can convey their grievances. Some Missions have established 24x7 help lines and Toll Free help lines. The multi-lingual 24X7 Helpline of Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) in Gurugram, Haryana provides information and guidance on all matters and problems pertaining to overseas employment of Indian nationals. Migrant Resource Centres have also been setup in Kochi, Hyderabad Gurugram, Chennai and Lucknow.

6. The India Centre for Migration (formerly Indian Council for Overseas Employment) serves as a research think-tank of the Ministry on all matters related to international migration and is assisting in policy-making on matters related to emigrating workers and promoting overseas employment of Indians.

7. The government has been making all possible efforts towards ensuring welfare and safeguarding the interests of Indian nationals abroad.